

BIENNIAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

October 1, 2005 - September 30, 2007



OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES
Focusing on a brighter future

Submitted to the Judiciary Committee

Connecticut General Assembly Pursuant to General Statutes § 54-203(b)(18)

Focusing on a brighter future



CHAMBERS OF
BARBARA M. QUINN, JUDGE
CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR

231 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106

January 15, 2008

Senator Andrew J. McDonald, Co-Chair
Representative Michael P. Lawlor, Co-Chair
Members of the Judiciary Committee

It is my pleasure to present this report outlining the activities of the Office of Victim Services for the biennium October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2007. This document is submitted in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes 54-203(b)(18).

I hope that you find this report helpful. Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information.

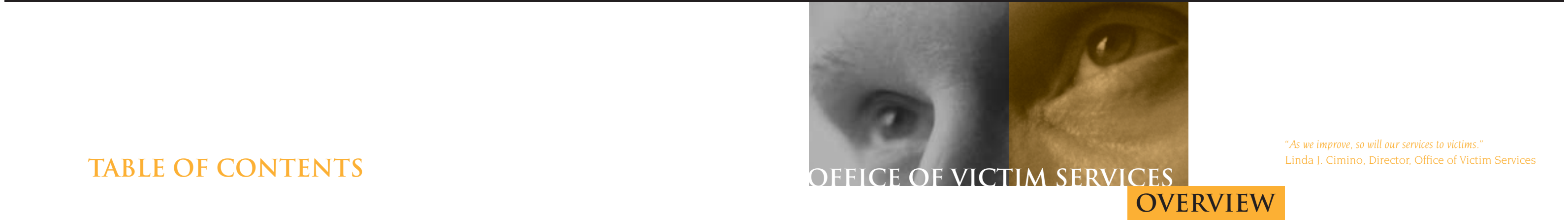
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BM Quinn".

Barbara M. Quinn, Judge
Chief Court Administrator

BMQ:sw

c: Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers
Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III, Deputy Chief Court Administrator
Joseph D. D'Alesio, Executive Director, Superior Court Operations
Linda J. Cimino, Director, Office of Victim Services



"As we improve, so will our services to victims."
Linda J. Cimino, Director, Office of Victim Services

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Office of Victim Services Overview	3
Advisory Council for Victims of Crime	4
Compensation Unit	6
Education & Planning Unit	9
Grants & Contracts Unit	12
Victim Services Unit	17
Legislative Update	20

29 years of service to Connecticut residents

OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES OVERVIEW

The Office of Victim Services (OVS) is the state's lead agency dedicated to providing services to victims of violent crime.

In order to provide the most effective services to crime victims, first responders, community providers, and the courts, OVS continually assesses its services, printed materials, and training programs. This constant evaluation is due, in part, to the changing needs of OVS stakeholders.

Many of the changes that occurred during this biennial period are outlined in the following sections. The most far reaching changes were driven by the recommendations of the OVS Strategic Planning Committee.

Convened in September 2005, the Strategic Planning Committee was comprised of community stakeholders representing private agencies and the victim's perspective and OVS staff.

The committee members gave generously of their time and ideas and created a plan that would inspire and guide the agency.

OVS adopted a new:
Vision Statement: Connecticut will be a state where all victims of crime are treated with respect and fairness and will receive comprehensive, coordinated, and victim-centered services.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Office of Victim Services is to provide statewide leadership and the highest quality advocacy, services, and education guided by the individual crime victim's experience.

- Core Values:**
- ~ Empowering crime victims
 - ~ The individual victim's experience
 - ~ Instilling victims with trust and confidence in the administration of justice within the Judicial Branch
 - ~ Victim's rights afforded by the Connecticut State Constitution and General Statutes
 - ~ Victim-centered services that meet victims where they are and acknowledge who they are
 - ~ Compassionate and effective victim advocacy
 - ~ Respectful and fair treatment
 - ~ Timely, accessible, and high quality services
 - ~ Progressive and ongoing staff training
 - ~ Strong partnerships with community providers
 - ~ Supporting allied partners through education
 - ~ A community informed about victim's rights and resources

The adoption of the Strategic Plan provides a renewed commitment to OVS's stakeholders. The plan also provides OVS with a tangible way to measure change.

As OVS dedicated its Strategic Plan, this biennial is also dedicated to:

"All victims of crime, who share their stories, raise their voices, and stand in partnership with the victim assistance community, as together we work to create a culture that responds with justice and compassion to the victim's experience."



ADVISORY COUNCIL

According to General Statutes § 54-203(b)(11), “The council shall recommend to the Office of Victim Services program, legislative or other matters which would improve services to victims of crime and develop and coordinate needs assessments for both court-based and community-based victim services.”

The council is comprised of representatives from victim populations including, but not limited to, survivors of homicide victims, family violence victims, sexual assault victims, victims of drunk drivers, and assault and robbery victims, the chief victim compensation commissioner, and members from the judicial and executive branch agencies involved with victims of crime.

Council members are appointed by the chief justice to a four-year term. The time frame of this report spans two different councils.

A new council convened in 2006, the leadership is:
Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III, Co-Chair
Steven Eppler-Epstein, Co-Chair

The leadership for the 2005-2006 period was:
Honorable Salvatore C. Agati, Co-Chair
Michelle M. Duprey, Esquire, Co-Chair
(Please see list for full membership on page 5)

During this time period, the council discussed and provided input on:

- ~ Legislative initiatives that impacted the delivery of services to crime victims
- ~ Potential changes in federal Victims of Crime Act funding
- ~ OVS public awareness activities and materials
- ~ Solutions to the fiscal issues faced by the Compensation Unit
- ~ OVS Strategic Plan
- ~ A victim oriented focus group hosted by the Judicial Branch Public Service and Trust Commission

MEMBERS 2006-2007

Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III, Co-Chair
Judge
Fairfield Judicial District
Bridgeport, CT

Steven Eppler-Epstein, Esquire, Co-Chair
Executive Director
Connecticut Legal Services
Middletown, CT

Joseph W. Bibisi, Esquire
McVane, Bellobuono, Kuzmak,
Wiezalis & Bibisi, LLP
Hartford, CT

Larry Bostrom, Vice President
CT Alliance for Victims of Violence
and Their Families, Inc.
Marlborough, CT

Lisa Holden, Executive Director
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic
Violence, Inc.
East Hartford, CT

Nancy Kushins, Executive Director
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis
Services, Inc.
East Hartford, CT

Janice Heggie Margolis, Executive Director
Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Inc.
North Haven, CT

Cheryl Burack, Executive Director
Coordinating Council for Children
in Crisis Services, Inc.
New Haven, CT

Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director
Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission
Hartford, CT

Jan VanTassel, Esquire
Executive Director
Connecticut Legal Rights Project
Middletown, CT

Chester Brodnicki, Executive Director
Clifford Beers Guidance Clinic, Inc.
New Haven, CT

Neil O’Leary, Chief
Waterbury Police Department
Waterbury, CT

Lawrence L. D’Orsi, II, Deputy Director
Criminal Matters
Court Operations Division
Connecticut Judicial Branch

Kevin Lawlor, Esquire
State’s Attorney
Ansonia-Milford Judicial District
Milford, CT

John Duffey
Correctional Counselor Supervisor
Connecticut Department of Correction
Hartford, CT

MEMBERS 2005-2006

Honorable Salvatore C. Agati, Co-Chair
Judge
Waterbury Judicial District
Waterbury, CT

Michelle M. Duprey, Esquire, Co-Chair
Director
Disabilities Services for New Haven
New Haven, CT

Joseph W. Bibisi, Esquire
McVane, Bellobuono, Kuzmak,
Wiezalis & Bibisi, LLP
Hartford, CT

Larry Bostrom, Vice President
CT Alliance for Victims of Violence
and Their Families, Inc.
Marlborough, CT

Chester Brodnicki, Executive Director
Clifford Beers Guidance Clinic, Inc.
New Haven, CT

Nancy Kushins, Executive Director
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis
Services, Inc.
East Hartford, CT

John Duffey, Counselor Supervisor
Connecticut Department of Correction
Victim Services Unit
Wethersfield, CT

Steven Eppler-Epstein, Deputy Director
Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.
Middletown, CT

Robin Montgomery, Chief
Brookfield Police Department
Brookfield, CT

Carol Fenton, Director of Mental Health
FSW, Inc.
Bridgeport, CT

Mary Galvin, Esquire
State’s Attorney
Ansonia-Milford Judicial District
Milford, CT

Lisa Holden, Executive Director
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic
Violence, Inc.
East Hartford, CT

Janice Heggie Margolis, Executive Director
Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Inc.
North Haven, CT

Le Lien Smith, Project Coordinator
Connecticut Coalition of Mutual
Assistance Associations, Inc.
West Hartford, CT

Lawrence D’Orsi II, Deputy Director
Criminal Matters
Superior Court Operations Division
Connecticut Judicial Branch

Neil O’Leary, Chief
Waterbury Police Department
Waterbury, CT



The Mission of OVS is to
“provide ... the highest quality services ...”

What OVS heard from its stakeholders on Compensation Program services:

“Thank you for this program; it made a difficult time easier.”

“Each and every person we have come in contact with at the Office of Victim Services has been extremely sensitive to our situation and helpful. Thank you.”

“Thank you very much for the help you have provided after the death of my sister. This is a great program, and I will be forever appreciative. God bless.”

“In retrospect, I am extremely grateful for the undivided attention and caring (genuine) of the entire staff. Thank you.”

“Staff made me feel good in a bad situation. Thank you.”

“This is a very great service; it helps victims have a new stable life without fears. It helps us victims be more strong and lets us know we’re not alone. Gives us lots of security and values. Thank you for your services.”

“I could not of (sic) been more pleased for the way things were handled. Through my experience I found the Compensation Unit to be very well organized and dependable!”

BIENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OVS redesigned the victim compensation application, resulting in the creation of two distinct applications. The new applications are much less complicated and more user friendly.

In the first quarter of FFY 2006-2007, twenty percent of the applications received were returned to claimants for additional information. In the second quarter of this fiscal year, the requirement to have the application notarized was removed. This resulted in a seventy-five percent reduction in the return rate.

In October 2005, OVS created a Letter Review Workgroup charged with updating and revising all compensation correspondence in an effort to communicate clearly, consistently, and concisely with claimants and other stakeholders. For this biennium:

- ~ OVS expanded the number of claims examiners from three to four and filled the vacant accounting clerk position;
- ~ The number of applications received increased by ten percent;
- ~ OVS approved seven percent more claimants for payment;
- ~ The amount of compensation funds awarded increased by eight percent.

Overview

The Compensation Unit assists crime victims in recovering from the financial impact of crime. The compensation program is a payer of last resort that provides eligible crime victims and their family members with financial assistance for unreimbursed expenses associated with medical costs, mental health expenses, lost wages, lost wages to attend court proceedings in homicide cases, funeral expenses, and loss of support.

Compensation may not exceed \$15,000 in reimbursement for personal injury related claims and \$25,000 for survivors of homicide victims.

COMPENSATION UNIT ACTIVITY

During this biennium, the Compensation Unit financially assisted 609 victims of assault, the family members of 329 homicide victims, sixty-nine victims of sexual assault, twenty-six victims of vehicular crimes, and one victim of arson.

Four staff members of the Superior Court Operations Division served as determination specialists during this biennium. The determination specialists completed 2,458 determinations, (approved, awarded without pay, and non-compensable).

The following chart reflects the statistics as reported to the Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, in compliance with the Victim of Crime Act requirements.

VOCA STATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

October 1, 2005 - September 30, 2007

Number of claims received	2,524
Number of claims approved	1,808
Number of claims denied	650

PAYMENT STATISTICS BY CRIME CATEGORY	
Assault	\$2,352,478
Homicide	\$2,385,674
Sexual Assault	\$121,731
Child Abuse (includes sexual and physical abuse)	\$142,919
DWI/DUI	\$60,714
Other vehicular crimes	\$72,996
Robbery with injury	\$7,834
Arson	\$1,516
TOTAL	\$5,145,862

EXPENSES PAID BY SERVICE	
Economic Support (lost wages and loss of support)	\$2,529,142
Medical/dental	\$1,729,980
Funeral/burial	\$602,522
Mental health	\$246,448
Other (probate court fees, parent's lost wages, special needs)	\$37,770
TOTAL	\$5,145,862

Claimant Satisfaction Survey

In an effort to continuously monitor claimant satisfaction with the services provided, OVS sends satisfaction surveys to claimants sixty days after a determination has been made.

During this biennial period, OVS mailed 1,758 satisfaction surveys and 431 completed surveys were returned. This represents a twenty-five percent return rate, which was four percent higher than the return rate during the 2003-2005 biennial period.

Claimant satisfaction with the Compensation Unit continues to improve. Notable gains were recorded in all categories. For this biennium the surveys reflected an eleven percent increase in the number of respondents reporting that telephone calls to OVS were returned within one work day. Overall satisfaction with the program was recorded at nearly seventy-five percent. This represents a five percent increase since the last biennium. These survey results support that the staffing and process changes had a significant positive impact on a crime victim's interaction with the unit.

Claim Review Process

General Statutes § 54-205(b) grants a compensation applicant the right to request a review of the determination decision made on the claim within thirty days from mailing of the notice of such determination.

During this biennium the following served as victim compensation commissioners: Joseph W. Bibisi, chief victim compensation commissioner (appointed by the chief court administrator); Beth Bryan Critton; Daniel E. Dilzer; and Seth D. Feigenbaum.

During this biennium, the OVS victim compensation commissioners conducted seventy-five reviews. All victim compensation commissioners, appointed by the governor, are attorneys engaged in the practice of law for at least five years prior to their appointment.

RECOVERY PROGRAM

According to General Statutes § 54-212, if a claimant brings an action against the person or persons responsible for such injury or death, OVS shall have a lien on the applicant's recovery to the amount to which the office is entitled to reimbursement. The recovery specialist reviews each new application for the potential of recovery.

Recovery program activity

For this biennium, \$183,142 was recovered, which is a twenty-nine percent increase from the previous biennium.



*The Mission of OVS is to
"provide ... the highest quality education ..."*

What OVS heard from its stakeholders on trainings provided:

"The most useful topic was death notification. The information will probably be used many times on my job as a law enforcement officer. The steps shown will allow me to talk to the victims better than I would have done without the training."

"The information presented was very useful. The instructors were very knowledgeable and compassionate and gave us tips and helpful ways to deal with some of the most difficult aspects of our job."

"The topic most useful was about the victims' self image within the crime and how to address their issues."

"This class was a good challenge toward the end of time here at the academy as to what we should actually know and remember before hitting the streets."

"Death notification is a hard situation to deal with and learning the proper way to approach it with the training I received here will really help."

"The most useful thing I learned was that each victim has their own way of dealing with things and we need to adjust to their emotions. No victim is the same as another."

"I thought every topic was of great importance. The more information I have, the better equipped I am to do my job."

BIENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS

In May 2006, OVS sponsored the first of two workshops entitled **Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**. Dr. Laura Murray, Boston University, presented to fifty clinical staff from private nonprofit agencies who work with children. The workshop was so well-received that an advanced version was conducted in June 2007 to another thirty-five clinicians.

OVS and the Joint Center on Violence and Victim Studies co-sponsored a two-day workshop entitled **Morita Therapy** in May 2006. Approximately twenty professionals attended this intensive training taught by Dr. Brian Ogawa from Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas.

Public Act 06-100 directed a change to the OVS compensation program eligibility criteria for victims of sexual assault. To inform the victim assistance community and the public, OVS distributed 4,135 flyers to hospitals, sexual assault nurse examiners, and community health centers prior to October 1, 2006. In the summer of 2007, OVS distributed the flyers to the hospitals and community health centers, and included the flyer translated into Spanish.

In October 2006, approximately ninety law enforcement personnel attended a workshop on **Death Notification: Breaking the Bad News with Compassion**. This event was co-sponsored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and OVS.

Overview

The Education and Planning Unit serves and supports crime victims by:

- ~ Educating the community about and promoting awareness of the rights and concerns of Connecticut’s crime victims and of OVS services
- ~ Training criminal justice system professionals
- ~ Developing materials to support education and training activities

COMMUNITY EDUCATION ACTIVITY

The Education and Planning Unit has an active community education program designed to increase the public’s awareness of the rights and services available to crime victims.

Focused Education

Hospital Emergency Departments

According to General Statutes § 54-203(b)(1), OVS is authorized to direct hospital emergency rooms to display compensation program contact information for crime victims. OVS has collaborated with the Connecticut Hospital Association to distribute materials through the Emergency Department Directors’ forum. During this reporting period, OVS and a private graphic design firm redesigned the existing hospital outreach poster, which was originally designed in the previous biennium. This new version was distributed to all thirty acute care hospitals and the thirty-seven community health centers.

In addition, the Education and Planning Unit partnered with the Connecticut Hospital Association for the distribution of an informational packet to the social work departments of the thirty acute care hospitals.

Presentations

The Education and Planning Unit presents on victim-related topics to groups including OVS contractors and subcontractors, Judicial Branch employees, high school and college classes, and community organizations.

OVS staff from its speakers’ bureau made thirty-five presentations to 750 participants during this reporting period.

Radio Public Services Announcements

Each quarter this unit releases public service announcements (PSAs) describing services and providing contact information. These PSAs are released to forty-one English-language radio stations and seven Spanish-language stations.

During this biennium, this unit submitted PSAs tailored to specific OVS services (financial compensation, notification, and court-based advocacy).

OVS Web Page

OVS posts a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the OVS page of the Judicial Branch Internet Web site. This page provides detailed information about OVS services, contact information for all OVS programs, and links to publications related to crime victim rights and other victim related Web sites.

The OVS Strategic Planning Committee identified increasing OVS visibility as a primary goal; one objective is to improve OVS visibility through maximizing Internet technology.

During this biennium, the Education and Planning Unit in collaboration with Judicial Branch External Affairs Division maximized Internet technology with the Web site posting of several OVS co-sponsored trainings. This provided easily accessible training information and efficient on-line registration.

TRAINING ACTIVITY

The Education and Planning Unit provides training on the topics of victims’ rights, services, and victim responses to crime to three primary audiences:

- ~ Mandated audiences are those groups addressed by the General Statutes § 54-203(b)(17) (judges, prosecutors, police, probation and parole personnel, bail commissioners, correction officers, and judicial marshals)
- ~ The victim assistance community consists of private nonprofit agencies that provide service to crime victims
- ~ OVS staff who provide direct and indirect services to victims of crime

MANDATED TRAINING ACTIVITY

AUDIENCE	SESSIONS	PARTICIPANTS
Judges - PreBench	2	12
Marshals - Recruit	4	125
Police - POSTC	10	430
Police - Other Academies	9	287
Pardons and Paroles	1	27
Total	26	881

Mandated Training Enhancements

In collaboration with the Police Officer and Standards Training Council (POSTC), the Education and Planning Unit revised and expanded the Victim-Witness Module delivered to municipal police recruits. During the previous biennium, a new, yet brief section was developed to instruct on the proper procedures for delivering a death notification. As a result of the overwhelming positive response by recruits, OVS, with permission of the POSTC, expanded the Victim-Witness Module from two hours to four hours, in 2007, to enable a thorough presentation on the subject of death notification.

Victim Assistance Community Training

As the State’s lead agency established to provide services to crime victims, OVS has an important role in the delivery of training to victim assistance professionals across Connecticut. OVS’s primary method of delivery to this community is through statewide training.

Statewide Training Events

Each quarter the Education and Planning and Grants and Contracts Units conduct half-day trainings on topics of interest for the staff of the OVS subcontracted agencies. The training consists of a presentation on the compensation program as well as on a topic related to victim assistance. Approximately 130 agency staff attended these presentations during the biennium.

Staff Development and Training

In-service Activities

In collaboration with the Education and Planning Unit, each OVS unit develops an annual in-service training calendar that is driven by trends identified from performance data, staff input and competencies, and program goals. The Compensation Unit and the Victim Services Unit hold quarterly in-service activities.

The OVS Strategic Planning Committee recommended that OVS should develop mechanisms for recognizing and appreciating staff contributions. In June 2007, OVS held the first annual Staff Appreciation Day. In an effort to annualize this event, the Education and Planning Unit will facilitate the newly formed Staff Recognition Committee, which will be responsible for coordinating this event.

During 2006, the OVS staff development database was created to track all staff training activities. This is an important enhancement to this function, as more staff seek professional victim assistance credentials, which require specific training and continuing education.

MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT AND DISTRIBUTION ACTIVITY

The Education and Planning Unit develops materials that inform victims, the victim assistance community, and the public about the rights of crime victims and the services available to them. This unit has developed approximately twenty-five brochures, posters, and booklets that are distributed upon request and without cost to the requester.

Annually, this unit encourages all Connecticut police departments to help victims at the crime scene by distributing information about victim services. This unit provides police departments with a victim resource list that contains 24-hour hotline telephone numbers and service information. During this biennium, police departments requested over 11,700 resource lists from the Judicial Branch Materials Management Unit’s warehouse.



GRANTS & CONTRACTS UNIT

*The Mission of OVS is to
“... provide statewide leadership, and ... services.”*

What OVS heard from its stakeholders on the Subcontractor Quarterly Trainings and Meetings:

“Thank you. It was wonderful, very informative!”

“It was very well prepared and informative.”

“Great information. Thank you for the exposure to a program that will not only help professionally but in the community we live!”

“The [agency name] would like to thank OVS and their staff for organizing the Subcontractor meeting on April 9, 2007 that lead to many essential changes in the reporting documents and timeframes. The new documents and forms are more user-friendly.”

What stakeholders stated about the assistance they received from OVS subgrantees:

“Thank you for your services. This has been such a positive experience.”

“We are very grateful for their care and commitment to the children and families of our ... area office.”

“The VOCA Program has made quite an impact on my life. ...I’m a stronger person now and I hope that VOCA can make a difference in many others lives as well.”

“This program is awesome. I want to thank everyone who has helped me.”

“The group has greatly improved my quality of life by providing support through the most difficult times of my life.”

“Through the support system I found in [agency name], I now have a safe place to go where people really understood the feelings, pain, and suffering I was going through. They gave me the strength to find my voice again.”

Overview

The Grants and Contracts Unit, through a formal contracting process, awards funds to non-profit agencies and municipalities throughout the state of Connecticut to enhance or expand the community service delivery network for crime victims and their families.

The Grants and Contracts Unit is responsible for ensuring that all grant funds distributed by OVS are expended in accordance with the grantors’ guidelines, state guidelines, and Judicial Branch policies and procedures so that effective services to crime victims can be provided.

Funding

OVS receives state and federal funding for the purposes of contracting for programs and activities that provide information, services and assistance to victims of violent crimes and their families. OVS’s primary source of federal funding is the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Crime Victims Fund. OVS receives grants for victim assistance and victim compensation from this fund.

In the second year of the biennium OVS received additional state funding that resulted in the expansion of victim advocate services to the sex offender supervision units from three locations to fourteen locations throughout the state. This expansion allowed for increased victim input into the treatment of supervised sex offenders. OVS also received funding that enabled OVS to issue a contract for shelter services to victims of human trafficking.

BIENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS Postcards highlighting the benefits of VOCA funding were distributed with the FY 2006-2008 request for proposal notice to demonstrate how VOCA funding could benefit an agency’s services.

OVS hosted a meeting in September 2006 with staff members of the VOCA subcontracting agencies. At this meeting, OVS staff provided an updated procedures manual, discussed changes in reporting requirements for OVS, changes in the compensation program, and an update on OVS strategic planning initiatives.

In February 2007, OVS awarded \$25,000 to a subgrantee for the provision of shelter services to victims of human trafficking.

OVS hosted a meeting in April 2007 with program administrators from the OVS grant funded agencies to discuss reporting requirements, OVS grant administration guidelines, and administrative tasks necessary for administration of OVS grant funds. In an effort to streamline the reporting process and reduce the administrative reporting burden on subgrantees, OVS revised its reporting requirements for grant funded projects. The new forms and reporting requirements were distributed to the grantees on June 1, 2007 for use in FY 2007-2008.

For the two-year period ending June 30, 2007, OVS issued contracts totaling \$13,103,208 (includes federal and state funds as well as the match requirement) to victim service providers who provided services to 102,927 victims of crime.

In July 2007, OVS redesigned the request for proposal documents to eliminate unnecessary or duplicative requests for information. In addition to the redesign, the length of the period covered by the request for proposal was increased from two to three years.

SUMMARY OF GRANT FUNDS RECEIVED	TOTAL RECEIVED
<i>Federal Awards</i>	
Victims of Crime Act Assistance	\$9,335,000
Victims of Crime Act Compensation	\$1,845,000
<i>State of Connecticut Judicial Branch</i>	
Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund	\$4,050,000
General Fund Appropriations	\$2,020,119
Total Grants Awarded	\$17,250,119

Federal Crime Victimization Priority Categories
Programs funded with VOCA Victim Assistance and Judicial Branch appropriated funds are awarded to service providers based upon the four priority categories of victimization as established by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.

- The priority categories are:
- ~ Child abuse
 - ~ Domestic violence (includes child witnesses)
 - ~ Sexual assault
 - ~ Previously underserved victims of various crimes (includes assault, robbery, hate and bias crimes, adults molested as children, intoxicated driving, elder abuse, family members of homicide victims, abuse of vulnerable adults, gang-related crimes, stalking, federal crimes, economic exploitation, and fraud)

Grant Funded Services to Crime Victims
OVS funds forty-two agencies to provide services to crime victims. These agencies are located in each of the eight counties of the state of Connecticut. The major cities of Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Stamford, and Waterbury have multiple programs that provide a variety of services to crime victims. A listing of these agencies may be found on page 16.

These forty-two agencies provided services to 102,927 victims of crime during the past two years.

Services are provided to individuals of all age ranges, races, and ethnicities. Demographic information provided for new victims served during the 2005-2007 period indicates that the majority of victims were twenty-five to forty-four years old (48.5%), female (75.3%), and white (49.7%).

Types of Services Supported by Grant Funds
During this biennium, VOCA funds were used by subcontracting agencies to provide crime victims with a variety of services. The largest percentage of awarded funds were for advocacy based programs, however OVS provided funding for therapy programs for adults and children, on-scene crisis response for child victims of crime, and translation and interpreting services for non-English speaking crime victims.

ACTIVITY BY PRIORITY CATEGORY – OVS GRANT PROJECTS				
Priority Category	Number of Victims Served	Percentage of Victims Served	Expenditures*	Percentage of Expenditures
Child Abuse	8,173	7.94%	3,029,996	23.13%
Domestic Violence	86,549	84.09%	6,943,719	52.99%
Sexual Assault	2,942	2.86%	1,007,701	7.69%
Underserved	5,263	5.11%	2,121,792	16.19%
Totals	102,927	100.0%	13,103,208	100.0%

*Expenditures reflect total project expenditures of grant funds and applicant matching funds.

Advocacy programs provided services to victims in courts, shelters, specific towns and neighborhoods, or on a state-wide basis through the use of regional offices. These programs provided victims with crisis counseling, safety planning, assistance with basic needs, assistance with filing compensation claims, information and referral to other social service agencies, assistance in court, and translation and interpreting services. Programs also liaise with OVS victim services advocates.

In addition, OVS funded a number of programs that provided free therapy services to child and adult victims of crime. These services included the initial psychiatric evaluation, individual and group therapy sessions, follow-up, referral to other services, and assistance with filing compensation claims. Most of the programs offered short-term therapy, and if eligible for compensation, the victim could receive additional therapy to be paid for by the compensation program.

Request for Proposal Process
In October 2005, OVS began the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the two-year grant cycle that started on July 1, 2006. Proposal reviews were conducted in February

and March of 2006. Seven agencies received additional funding to expand program services to new geographic areas in the state or new crime victim populations.

Program Effectiveness
In keeping with OVS's responsibility to ensure that grant funds are expended in accordance with federal, state, and Judicial Branch regulations, the Grants and Contracts Unit conducted thirty-one on-site subcontractor monitoring visits during this biennium. The site visits were designed to ensure that the funded programs operate in accordance with the contract and to provide technical assistance, if needed, to the service providers. The continuing focus of the visits was on program evaluation methods and accurate data collection. Outcome measures developed in the first year of the contract provided OVS with information to evaluate service providers' past performance, and to work with the service providers to improve or enhance future performance. OVS wants to ensure that the subcontractors have a means to evaluate the effectiveness of their program activities and their progress towards the stated goals and objectives of the program.

ACTIVITY BY TOP FIVE SERVICES - OVS GRANT PROJECTS

Type of Service Provided	Number of Victims Receiving Service	Percentage of Victims Receiving Service
Crisis Counseling	64,594	19.18 %
Assistance with Compensation Claims	63,949	18.99 %
Safety Planning	62,252	18.49 %
Criminal Justice Support and Advocacy	47,247	14.03 %
Information and Referral: (In-person)	35,995	10.69 %
Other Services	62,729	18.62 %
Total - All Service Types	336,766	100.00 %

Aetna Foundation/St. Francis Hospital Children's Center Hartford Regional Child Abuse Support Services Program	Coordinating Council for Children In Crisis Neighborhood Victim Advocacy Program
Charlotte-Hungerford Hospital Center for Youth and Families Charlotte's Place	FSW Domestic Violence Services
Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut Child & Adolescent Crime Victims Assistance Program	Hartford Behavioral Health Assistance to Survivors of Homicide Victims Program
Child Guidance Clinic of Greater Waterbury Child Victims Assistance Program	Human Resources Agency of New Britain Polish Victim Advocacy Program
City of Bridgeport Police Department Law Enforcement Based Victim Services Program	Klingberg Family Centers Child Abuse Treatment Services
Clifford Beers Guidance Clinic Project CATCH (Collaboration Advocacy and Treatment for Children)	Mothers Against Drunk Driving, CT State Organization Victim Assistance Program
Community Child Guidance Clinic of Manchester Victim Assistance Program	Salvation Army Victim Assistance Program (This contract was funded for State Fiscal Year 2005-2006 only)
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence Enhanced Services to Victims of Domestic Violence	Survivors of Homicide Victim Support Service Program
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence Services to Victims of Family Violence Court- Based Program	The Hospital of Central Connecticut Victim Assistance Program
Connecticut Coalition of Mutual Assistance Associations Victim Advocacy for Refugees and Immigrants	Yale University School of Medicine Child Development Community Policing Program (This contract was funded for State Fiscal Year 2005-2006 only)
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services Intensive Supervision of Sex Offenders Units	Yale University School of Medicine Child Sexual Abuse Clinic
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services Rape Crisis Intervention Services	



The Mission of OVS is to
"provide ... the highest quality advocacy..."

What OVS heard from its stakeholders on the assistance provided by OVS victim services advocates:

“...[My] victim advocate has been a godsend to our family through this very difficult time. Without her, we would be lost.”

“[My victim services advocate] sets the standard for anyone in the position of victim’s advocate. She is caring, compassionate, articulate, professional, and organized. We were very lucky to have her assistance throughout this ordeal and the State of Connecticut should be honored to have her as a member of their staff. We cannot thank her enough for everything she did for us.”

“My advocate ... was a super star!”

“My assigned court advocate ... was exemplary and extremely communicative and helpful.”

“[My victim services advocate] has been a godsend. He understands what we are going through and validates us when we need validation.”

“Without [my victim services advocate’s] skill and kindness, I would truly not have been able to understand the makings of court rules as well as the charges ... She explained specific details of juvenile proceedings and taught us so much ...”

“Thank you for answering our million questions, for trying to explain things that we just could not understand no matter how many times we asked the same questions over and over again.”

BIENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS

BIENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS OVS hosted several meetings in 2005-2006 with the Department of Correction and the Board of Pardons and Paroles Victim Services Units to enhance and improve notification services provided to victims of inmates. An accomplishment of these meetings was the mapping of crime victims' access to the notification process from the time of the initial incident, through the court process, until the inmate is released from custody.

In early 2006, five OVS victim services advocates became credentialed advocates from the National Advocate Credentialing Program. One of the benefits of obtaining credentialing is to establish recognition and credibility in the victim services field.

In the spring of 2006, OVS hired and trained four victim services advocates. They were assigned to the following Geographical Area (GA) courts: Bristol, Derby, New Haven, and Norwich.

During the summer of 2006, a special Juvenile Matters VSA committee completed a juvenile court brochure and a set of “Frequently Asked Questions” for victims of juvenile crime.

In January 2007, OVS hired and trained a victim services advocate who was assigned to the helpline and notification programs. In April 2007, a victim services advocate was hired to fill a vacancy at the Waterbury GA court.

In the spring of 2007, OVS developed a new statistical data collection program to assess the advocacy provided and the types of victims served in an effort to improve service performance. The data collected includes victim's demographic information, type of victimization and the services provided to victims while their offender's case progresses through the criminal justice system.



Overview

The Victim Services Unit provides the following direct services:

- ~ Court-based victim advocacy
- ~ Helpline
- ~ Post-conviction notification
- ~ Protection order registry notification
- ~ Outreach services to family members of homicide victims

These services support crime victims throughout the criminal justice process by:

- ~ Notifying crime victims of their rights
- ~ Referring crime victims to community services
- ~ Providing support and information

VICTIM SERVICES ADVOCACY

- The duties and responsibilities of victim services advocates (VSA) are outlined in General Statutes § 54-220:
- ~ Provide initial screening of each personal injury case
 - ~ Assist victims in the preparation of victim impact statements to be placed in court files
 - ~ Notify victims of their rights and request that each victim attest to the fact of such notification of rights
 - ~ Provide information and advice to victims in order to assist such victims in exercising their rights throughout the criminal justice process
 - ~ Direct victims to public and private agencies for service
 - ~ Coordinate victim applications to OVS
 - ~ Assist victims in the processing of claims for restitution

Whether in person or by telephone, OVS VSAs ensure that crime victims understand their rights at each proceeding. VSAs also accompany victims to court and support them as they present impact statements.

Victim Services Advocacy Program Activity

New cases opened	12,895
Victims assisted with impact statements	13,972
Court accompaniments	7,498
Number of people accompanied to court	15,138

HELPLINE SERVICE

OVS operates a statewide, toll-free Helpline (800-822-8428) to assist callers in obtaining information on OVS and community-based services.

The VSA assigned to the Helpline assists victims whose offender's case is held in a court location where there is not an assigned OVS VSA. Assistance includes informing victims of their rights, helping crime victims understand the criminal justice system, and referring victims to the appropriate state's attorney.

Helpline Service Activity

Total Helpline calls received	3,139
Telephone calls received from family members of homicide victims	51
Telephone calls received from victims	2,648

POST-CONVICTION NOTIFICATION

The goal of the program is to provide eligible individuals with information regarding the status of an inmate. To receive notification, individuals must submit a confidential request for notification form to OVS or the Department of Correction Victim Services Unit.

Persons who may request notification are:

- ~ Crime victims
- ~ Parents/guardians of crime victims
- ~ Relatives of crime victims
- ~ Inmate family members
- ~ State's attorneys

OVS notifies registrants when an inmate has made an application to the:

- ~ Board of Pardons and Paroles
- ~ Department of Correction for release other than furlough
- ~ Sentencing court or judge for a reduction in sentence
- ~ Sentence Review Division for a review of sentence
- ~ Sentencing court for exemption from the sex offender requirements of General Statutes § 54-251
- ~ Sentencing court for an order restricting the dissemination of sex offender registration

The VSA provides information about changes in the status of convicted inmates and provides referrals to registrants.

OVS maintains strong collaborations with the Department of Correction, Board of Pardons and Paroles, Sentence Review Division, Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Adult Probation, and the Psychiatric Security Review Board.

Post-Conviction Notification Program Activity

Number of victims who request Post-conviction notification	594
Number of inmate status letters sent to requesters	3,544

PROTECTION ORDER REGISTRY NOTIFICATION

The Protection Order Registry program features automated notification to protected parties when protective orders terminate or five weeks prior to the expiration of restraining orders. The VSA answers questions, provides referrals, and informs protected parties about extending the restraining order if necessary.

Protection Order Registry Notification Program Activity

Protective order letter-prompted telephone calls received	556
Referrals made from letter-prompted telephone calls	1,416
Notification letters mailed to victims	57,424

OUTREACH SERVICES TO FAMILY MEMBERS OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS

OVS developed the Homicide Outreach program in 1988 to enhance services to family members whose lives have been affected by the murder of a loved one.

A victim services supervisor assists family members with information on the compensation process, referrals to grief counselors and community based agencies, and the appropriate court-based VSA that will be assisting the family during the criminal proceedings.

Outreach Services Activity

Number of homicide cases opened	328
---------------------------------	-----



During this biennial period, Chapter 968 Victim Services of the Connecticut General Statutes was amended six times.

Public Act 05-68 An Act Concerning Notification of the Office of Victim Services by the Department of Correction Upon Release of an Inmate amended: General Statutes § 54-231 by requiring the Department of Correction to notify the Office of Victim Services when an inmate is granted a specific type of furlough. The Department of Correction must give notice when an inmate is allowed to serve an unspecified period of time reintegrating into the community immediately preceding discharge or release on parole.

Public Act 05-146 An Act Concerning Notification of Inmate Applications for Release or Other Relief amended: General Statutes § 54-227, § 54-228 and § 54-229 through a technical change which statutorily establishes a Victim Services Unit in the Department of Correction.

Public Act 05-152 An Act Concerning Court Operations amended: General Statutes § 54-228(a) by requiring the Department of Correction to notify the Office of Victim Services when an inmate is granted a specific type of furlough, and General Statutes § 54-228(c) by clarifying that the Department of Correction and the Office of Victim Services may communicate “with each other to determine if either has a current mailing address of a victim and, if so, from disclosing such mailing address to each other for the purpose of facilitating notification to the victim, provided such mailing address shall not be further disclosed.”

Public Act 05-169 An Act Concerning Crime Victims amended: General Statutes § 54-222a through technical changes and indemnifies peace officers “for failing to present an informational card to any crime victim” and expands the definition of crime victims eligible to receive the information card to those crime victims as defined by General Statutes § 1-1k.

Public Act 05-249 An Act Concerning Criminal Justice Planning and Eligibility for Crime Victim Compensation amended: General Statutes § 54-211 by removing the deadline for certain crime victims or their immediate families to request a waiver of the time limit for compensation applications.

Public Act 06-100 An Act Concerning Crime Victims amended: General Statutes § 54-211(a)(1) by allowing the Office of Victim Services to accept applications for compensation from sexual assault victims who presented themselves to “a health care facility within seventy-two hours of such sexual assault for examination and collection of evidence of such sexual assault,” thereby removing the requirement of sexual assault victims to also report the offense. General Statutes § 54-211(a)(6) allowed the Office of Victim Services to waive filing time limitations upon a “finding of compelling equitable circumstances.” General Statutes §54-211(d)(1) allows the Office of Victim Services “upon a finding of compelling equitable circumstances, award compensation in an amount in excess of the maximum amounts set forth in said subdivision.”

OVS MAIN NUMBER

860 263-2760

TOLL-FREE COMPENSATION STATEWIDE

888 286-7347

TOLL-FREE HELPLINE STATEWIDE

800 822-8428



Office of Victim Services
State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
225 Spring Street Wethersfield, CT 06109
www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim